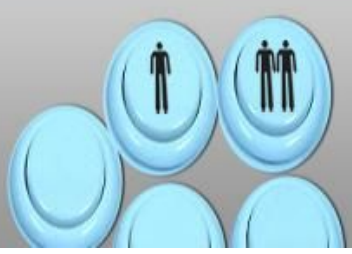
TECHEDUPTEACHER.COM

The Gamification Guide

-Insert Coin-

The How-to Companion for Every Classroom Teacher

CHRIS AVILES



v002

The Gamification Guide
Table of Contents

What Is Gamification?

Why Gamification?

When To Gamify?

How Do I Gamify my Classroom?

Stage 1: Motivating the Player
- Stage 1.1 - Epic Meaning
  - 1.12 - XP Grading
  - 1.13 Choosing a Genre
- Stage 1.2 - Leaderboards
  - 1.21 Pseudonymity through Learner Tags
  - 1.22 Straight Grade Competition
  - 1.23 - Finding Epic Wins in Straight Grade Competition
  - 1.24 - Adding Perks
  - 1.25 - The Power of “???”
- 1.3 - Achievements
  - 1.31 The Anatomy of an Achievement
  - 1.32 Using Achievements Effectively
  - 1.33 The Achievement Spectrum
  - 1.34 Tracking Achievements on the Leaderboard with Levels
- 1.4 The Item Shop
  - 1.41 - Gamify Attendance
  - 1.42 Pricing the Item Shop
  - 1.43 Items for the Item Shop
  - 1.44 Access Items
  - 1.45 Power Items
  - 1.46 Powers
  - 1.47 Tracking Items, Purchases, and Powers
- Stage 1: Final Thoughts
- Stage 2: Leveling Up Instructional Design
- Stage 3: The Classroom as an Experience

Glossary

Resources

Thank Yous

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

What Is Gamification?

If you ask twenty people what gamification is, you're going to get twenty different opinions. If you ask twenty people how to gamify the classroom, you're going to get twenty different ways to do it. While there are a few wrong ways to gamify, there are countless ways to do it *right.* This guide is not the *best* way to gamify. It is how *I* gamify. It is the system I've developed over the last six years. It is the system that works best for me and my students. It is the system that I love to rollout every year. If you like what you read, steal it. I hope, however, that you will eventually make your own system from an amalgamation of other systems, best practices, and your own style. That being said, it's important to define what gamification is and what it is not in the context of this guide.

Gamification is the use of game-mechanics and elements in non-game contexts. Gamification is taking the game-mechanics and elements that kids love about games, video games and installing them into to your classroom. Your classroom doesn't *use* video games, your classroom *is* a video game. Your students are the players and you are the **Gamemaster**. You may sometimes hear the term **Gameful Learning** interchanged with gamification. Gameful Learning is a more broad, generic term in the world of gamification which basically means the same thing. The other most often heard term in gamification circles is **Game-Based Learning (GBL)**. Game-Based Learning is using the games students play at home to teach and assess. I love Game-Based Learning. I teach with games like Cities: Skylines, Offworld Trading Company, and Minecraft, but that isn't gamification and won't be covered in this guide.

Why Gamification?

I have zero interest at this point in the life of this guide to convince you why gamification is an important tool for a teacher to have in his or her tool box. Instead, this guide assumes you are here because you are ready to get started. Before we get started though, I do want to say one thing about gamification because it is a recent revelation: gamification is about designing your classroom around the **student experience (SX)**.

Think about it. Video games are designed around giving the player an amazing experience. In a world where we won't let students go to the bathroom without permission or speak without raising their hands, video games tell students they are the chosen ones. In video games, our students are the only ones who can save the world. They have the power.

Before gamification, I designed my classroom around objectives, standards, learning outcomes, and worst of all, assessments. Not once did I consider the student experience in my classroom; not once did I think about what it was like to be a student in my class. Because of gamification, I start with my kids in mind. Thanks to gamification, my classes are designed around having a fun and exciting learning experience first. I look at all the things I have to do as a teacher through the lens of making it as enjoyable as possible for as many students as possible. If you have never played a video game in your life, that's OK. You can still create a great gamified classroom just by focusing on the student experience - the amazing intersection where Game Design, Design Thinking and the User Experience meet education.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

When To Gamify?

Gamification is just another tool for a teacher's toolbox. It is not a panacea nor catch-all for the classroom. It will not solve all your problems, nor make your students smarter. Gamification is great for three things:

1. **Motivating, engaging, and empowering students.**
2. **Re-engaging students who might have fallen out of love with school.**
3. **Building a positive class culture that focuses on powerful relationships.**

Further, knowing when to use gamification is just as important as knowing when not to. My system has been designed to be completely modular. That means any mechanic or element can be used or not used; they can be turned on or off.

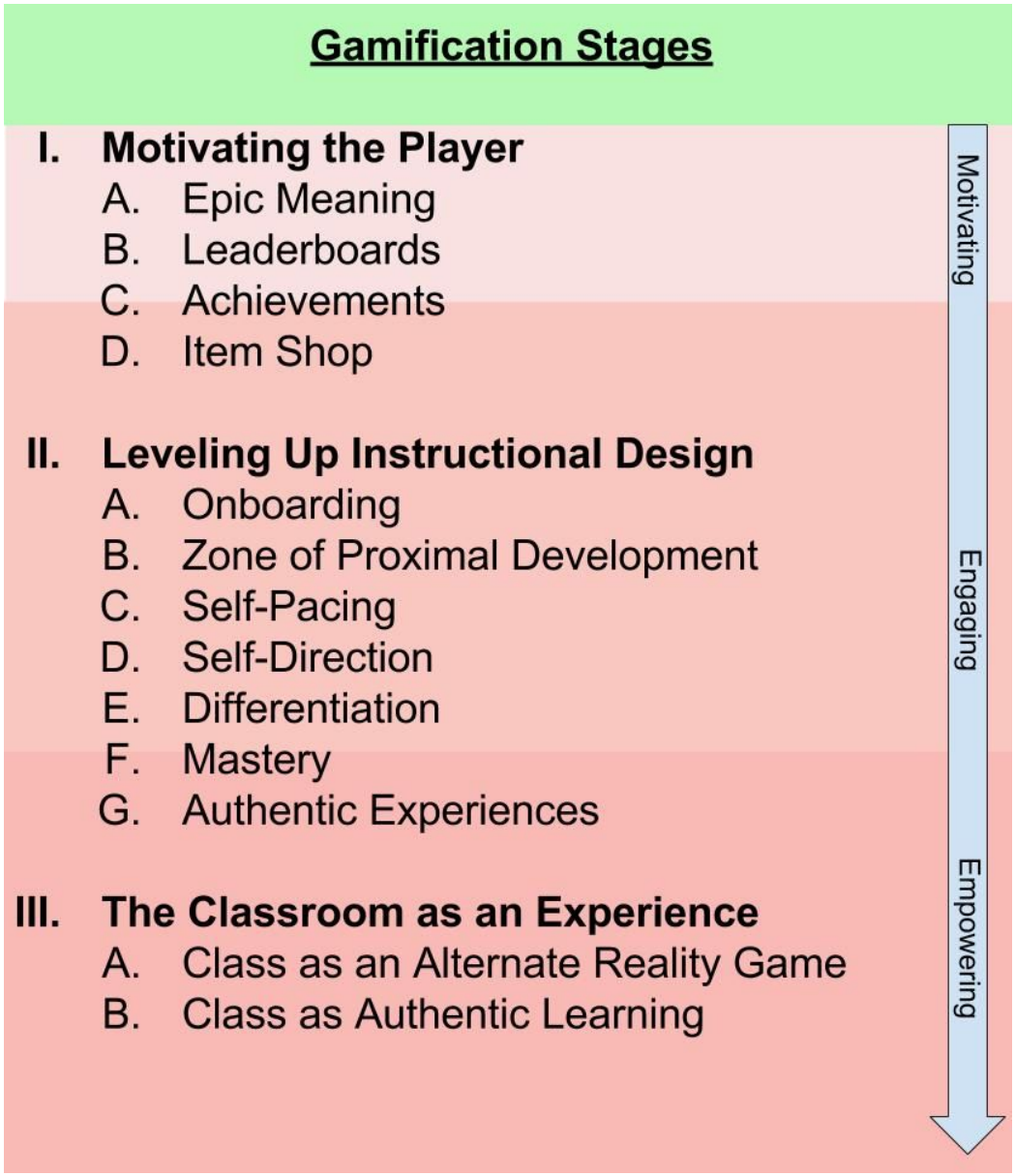
How Do I Gamify my Classroom?

Finally, the reason we are all here! Of the six years I've gamified, four were spent teaching sophomore English. The other two have been spent working with third through sixth graders in my Innovation Lab, my take on a makerspace. When I taught high school English, I taught the lowest tracked students in a tough school district. Many of my students were students of color, like me. Now, I teach in an affluent school district and only see each group of kids once a week. I've worked with dozens of teachers from around the world to implement my system of gamification in their classroom, too. I've worked with new teachers, veteran teachers, and teachers who have never played a video game before. I've worked with kindergarten teachers through college professors, every subject and schedule, and with teachers who had no access to technology. I say this not to brag, but only to assure you, there is something in this guide for everyone.

I love gamification. I spend a lot of time thinking about my system and tinkering with it. I don't expect everyone to take gamification to the level I do. Take what you like in my system and use it. Start small if you want, with a few mechanics, and slowly add more as you get more comfortable with gamification. Ultimately, I hope that you develop your own system, a system that works best for you (maybe we can collaborate?), and share it with the world. Together, I hope we can put the student before the assessment. Together, I hope we can motivate, engage, and empower our kids to fall deeper in love with learning and make school as motivating, engaging, and empowering as a video game.

After six years in the trenches, the most basic outline of my system looks like this:

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

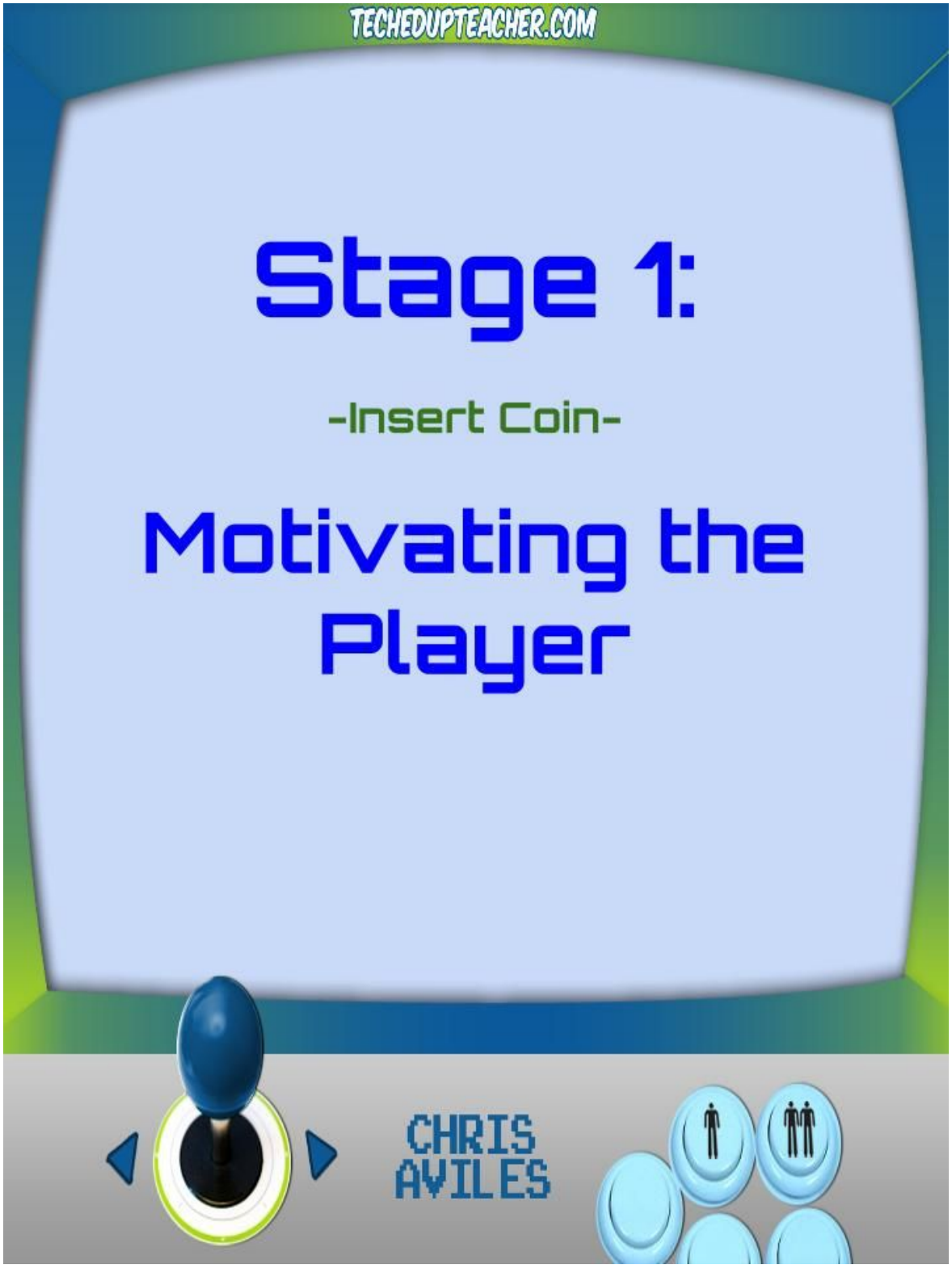


In *Stage 1: Motivating the Player*, we will motivate students with a new take on the classic **Points, Badges, and Leaderboards (PBL)** so often used in the classroom. In *Stage 2: Leveling Up Instructional Design* we will engage our students by leveling up our Instructional Design to focus on the student experience. Finally, in *Stage 3: The Classroom as an Experience*, we melt student faces by adding an empowering narrative where they play the main characters.

Game On!

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

Stage 1: Motivating the Player



©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

Creating an amazing SX requires we change our thinking. We must keep the student experience in mind above all else. Begin by thinking of your kids not as students, but as players and your class is the game. What kind of game have you made? What's the genre? Do your players love playing your game or do they turn it off after a couple of days? Would you love playing your game? What message is your game sending to students? To parents? Is your game fair? Is it award winning? Would students want to play the sequel to your game? Video games are constantly fixing bugs and adding new, exciting content through patches. When was the last time you **patched** your game or does your game still look the same as when you installed it years ago? Every decision you make (or don't make) about your class's mechanics and elements will become part of your game.

Our Quest: to make the greatest game we can for our players. A game that has players racing to get to class, on the edge of their seat when they get there, and upset when they have to leave. Once you can wrap your head around the idea that your class is a game we want students to love playing, you're ready to Press Start!

Stage 1.1 - Epic Meaning

Epic Meaning is the idea that students are part of something bigger than themselves when they're in your class. For them, your class taps into something special, something personal. When I taught high school, my kids often talked about how I believed in them, gave them voice and choice, and treated them like adults. I get similar comments from my middle school kids, too. My class has Epic Meaning. Creating Epic Meaning starts by changing how we think about grading and choosing what kind of game we want students to play.

1.12 - XP Grading

I believe every gamified class should use what I call **XP Grading**. XP Grading will be the foundation of your gamified classroom, so it should be the first thing you do if you want to gamify your class. The first step to creating XP Grading is moving to a Total Points grading system.

Let's think about the SX of grading. Most classes start students at a 100, A+. By doing this we are telling students that they have a hundred in our classes, all they have to do is keep it. The reality is, that's not possible. Traditional grading creates a system and classroom culture where failure is the only possibility. While there are no grades in a video game, there are levels. In games, players start at 0 and earn **experience points (XP)** as they complete quests. When they complete enough quests they level up becoming more powerful.

We want our grading to feel like a video game, so we are going to switch over to Total Points grading. In Total Points grading points are additive. Student assignments are worth a certain amount of points such as a 100 point test. A student earns 90 out of a 100, they have a 90 as a grade. Seems like what you're already doing until the next assignment. Say you give another test and the student earns a 50 out of a 100. Total Points grading has us add the total points attempted (2 tests x 100 points each = 200) and divides them by the total points earned (90 + 50 = 140). 140 divided by 200 is .7 or a 70 average for the two tests.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

What Total Points does is allow us to start students at 0 rather than 100, just like in a video game. As you'll see in my XP Grading, points are cumulative on multiple fronts. Everything a student does in our classes takes him or her further away from 0. With XP Grading, If a student doesn't do anything until November, then hands in a half done homework he earns points; he begins to level up. Success breeds success. Starting at zero helps create a positive culture.

But what if you teach in a district that uses weighted, sometimes called percentage-based, grades? Here is how I made XP Grading work while still staying within the confines of my district's grading policy.

My district used the following weighted grading categories for English classes:

- Tests – 45%
- Quizzes – 30%
- Homework –15%
- Participation –10%

A quiz is worth 15% less than a test; a test is worth 3.5x more than a participation assignment. Total Points grading still works within a weighted grading system. In fact, every major gradebook or **Learning Management System (LMS)** I've used such as Genesis, Power School, Schoology, etc. have had the option to use Total Points grading automatically built in. Here's a screenshot of my old Genesis gradebook:

1 MP2 Calc. Grade	2 E	3 A	Memes Mon - B-11/25 400.0	Desperate Cross Mon - B-11/25 400.0	BAI 4 Mon - B-11/25 300.0	Informal Thanks Mon - B-11/25 500.0	BAI Presentatio Mon - B-11/25 500.0	Psych Thesis Mon - B-11/25 400.0	JS Legacy Mon - B-11/25 400.0
93.3 (A)	8025.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	500.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
95.1 (A)	8175.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	475.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
88.1 (B)	7575.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	450.0	500.0	400.0	350.0
95.9 (A)	8250.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	425.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
95.3 (A)	8200.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	425.0	500.0	400.0	350.0
87.5 (B)	7525.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	425.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
92.4 (B)	7950.0	8600.0	350.0	400.0	300.0	450.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
90.8 (B)	7810.0	8600.0	350.0	400.0	0.0	485.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
91.6 (B)	7875.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	475.0	500.0	400.0	350.0
90.4 (B)	7775.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	0.0	475.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
95.9 (A)	8250.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	475.0	500.0	400.0	350.0
90.1 (B)	7750.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	0.0	450.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
97.2 (A)	8355.0	8600.0	400.0	400.0	300.0	450.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
92.2 (B)	7925.0	8600.0	350.0	350.0	300.0	375.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
94.5 (A)	8125.0	8600.0	350.0	400.0	300.0	475.0	500.0	400.0	400.0
91.9 (B)	7900.0	8600.0	350.0	400.0	300.0	400.0	500.0	400.0	350.0

1. Students' percentage grades (they are weighted behind the scenes).
2. How much XP a students has earned during the marking period.
3. How much XP a student could have earned during the marking period.

Divide column 2 by column 3 and you get a student's grade.

I'll talk about the assignment value in the next section, but for now, this should give you an idea of what a Total Points gradebook looks like. Further, here is a spreadsheet that helps explain what is going on behind the scenes and my explanation:

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

Student- Aviles, Chris				
Tests - 45%	**Quizes - 30%**	**Homework - 15%**	**Particpation - 10%**	**What if this was True Total Points grading?**
80	65	0	100	True Total Points Possible = 2100
55	100	0	80	True Total Points Earned = 1360
40	100	50	100	Earned / Possible = .647
100	10	50		**True Total Points Grade = 65**
90	60	60		
80	40	100		
Total	**Total**	**Total**	**Total**	
445	375	260	280	
Total / Possible	**Total / Possible**	**Total / Possible**	**Total / Possible**	
445 / 600 = .74	375 / 600 = .625	260 / 600 = .43	280 / 300 = .93	
Weighted Total Points	**Weighted Total Points**	**Weighted Total Points**	**Weighted Total Points**	**Weight Total Points Grade Added Up:**
74 x .45 = 33.3	63 x .30 = 18.9	43 x .15 = 6.45	93 x .10 = 9.3	33.3 + 18.9 + 6.45 + 9.3 = 67.98
				Weight Total Points Grade: 68

In this example, six 100-point tests, quizzes, and homework assignments have been given to the student along with three 100-point participation grades. If this was a true Total Point system where everything was weighted the same, we would just add up all the earned points (1360) and divide them by the possible points (2100) giving the student a 65 for the quarter. But since we are using a weighted Total Points system, we have to apply the weight (the percentage each category is worth) before adding up the Total Points of each section. In the weighted scenario, the student earned a 68 for the quarter. The other reason that understanding how true Total Points and weighted Total Points work is important is so you can make your XP Grading system cumulative.

> Another positive XP Grading change you can make in your classroom: instead of writing -200XP on a student's Quest, write +800XP. Little, positive nudges like this make a world of difference and help develop positive culture.

I'm often asked, "How can I use Total Points if I don't know how many assignments I am going to give in a year?" With Total Points grading, you don't have to know how many assignments you are going to give. Refer back to the picture of my Genesis gradebook. Notice how Earned (2) and Attempted (3) are such big numbers? That's because in Total Points grading, points are cumulative. I just keep adding the assignments and the points keep getting bigger, but it all gets broken down back to a traditional grade for the report card.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

I have seen many XP Grading systems, especially in college, where a teacher will start every student at zero. The teacher, usually in the syllabus, will layout every assignment a student must complete, how many points these assignments are worth, and how many of those points they must earn to reach a level (certain grade) in the class. There is nothing wrong with doing it this way. It can be just as effective, but know that you don't have to plan out every assignment in advance to have an XP Grading system.

The next thing you should do in your XP Grading system is make assignments worth more points. In games, bigger and more is better. Earning a 1000xp is more motivating than earning a 10xp. It also allows you to signify the difficulty or value of the assignment. I usually do something like this:

- Tests – 1000 pts
- Quizzes – 500 pts
- Homework – 400 pts
- Participation/Discussion – 300 pts

1.13 Choosing a Genre

The next step in creating Epic Meaning is deciding the genre of your gamified classroom. I decided that my classroom would be a **Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG)**. MMORPGs are the genre of video games where players go online and work together with other players to accomplish a common goal. World of Warcraft and Guild Wars 2 are two popular MMORPGs. MMOs are by no means the only genre of video games. There are a ton, but you don't have to know any of them. What you need to do is decide what genre, what theme best fits your class. My class uses common video game terms so my students earned XP while completing Quests. Maybe you're a History teacher. Your students could earn Merits while completing Missions. An Economics teacher? Your students can earn dollars while completing jobs. The point of determining your games genre is to decide what terminology you will use in class and how your class will feel. Anything you can dream up, video game related or not, will work. Draw inspiration from books, movies, the subject you teach. Find a theme to wrap your class in and run with it. For my kids, work became Quests. Units became Levels. Points became XP. I even rename what students do in my game. I usually use names like:

- Epic Quests (Tests) – 1000xp
- Heroic Quests (Quizzes) – 500xp
- Side Quests (Homework) – 400xp
- Social Quests (Participation, Discussion) – 300xp

I'm a recovering high school English teacher. I know words matter. What you choose to call a test in your gamified class matters. I choose to call tests Epic Quests because Epic Quests are something to be conquered while tests are something to be feared. I called Homework Side Quests and saw turn-in rates climb north of 80%. I never once said work or

assignment in class. Everything was a Quest, and Quests are worth XP. What are assignments called in your classroom? Picking a genre will help you decide. Think carefully. They should be fun, capture the spirit of the class, and be something with which you, the teacher, is comfortable. When you figure it out, add the new terminology to your XP Grading system and prepare to start exclusively using this new vocabulary in your class!

Stage 1.2 - Leaderboards

The **Bartle Taxonomy of Player Types** is a classification of video game players, based on a 1996 paper by Richard Bartle, according to their preferred actions within the game. The Bartle Test, as it is commonly called, identifies four types of video game players: Achievers, Explorers, Socializers, and Killers. While this is by no means an exhaustive test, and it has its flaws, it is a good entry point for us to begin to think about the types of students who will be playing our game. I built on Bartle's work and use this graphic to keep my players and what they like in mind as I design their SX.

While our XP Grading appeals to all of our players, we can start to tailor parts of our class to the types of players we will have in class: Gladiators, Achievers, Socializers, and Explorers.

Since we are starting our students at zero with XP Grading, it is easy to employ a leaderboard to increase motivation for *some* students. Leaderboards are common in the most

basic levels of gamification, but are often done poorly in the gamified classroom. Some of your students will love the competition, Gladiators and Achievers, while some of our students, Explorers and Socializers, either don't care about competition or will actually be demotivated by the leaderboard. This is one of the most common errors I see in the gamified classroom: a focus on competition. We can do better. After years of trial and error, I've created a leaderboard that appeals to all four types of students.

I use this leaderboard. A modified version of a leaderboard made by Mike Matera. I usually sell this leaderboard, but since you made it this far, you can have it for free. I love this leaderboard because it is easy to use, works perfectly for my system, and has all the parts of a successful leaderboard. If you want to use it, fantastic. If not, I'm going to go through what makes it a great leaderboard. Consider modeling your own leaderboard after the techniques used in the one I made.

Is it motivating? The best explanation I can give when it comes to deciding if something is motivating is the bus example: If you are arriving late to a bus stop, but still believe the bus is catchable, you will run for the bus. If you arrive late to a bus stop and see the bus blocks away, you won't run after the bus because you know it is impossible to catch. Understanding this is the key to understanding motivation in the gamified classroom. If the bus can be caught, students will run. If the bus is so far down the road that they have no chance to catch it, students won't run after the bus. In fact, they may go home because they don't want to wait for the next bus to come. Make sure students can catch the bus by keeping them in the Zone of Proximal Development.

1.21 Pseudonymity through Learner Tags

One of the first things we have to tackle with leaderboards, no matter which one you use, is how students will be able to see their progress. For a leaderboard to be motivating, it must be public. Since the first part of our leaderboard is going to focus on motivating our Gladiators and Achievers through the most basic use of a leaderboard in the gamified classroom, a straight grade competition, we can't use a students' real names. If you use a student's real name, anyone will be able to know his or her grade. No biggie because

Gladiators In Action - Our Gladiators, multiplayer minded students who are motivated by competition, will sometimes do something interesting with their Learner Tag. They will use their real name! When I ask students why, to make sure it wasn't an error, they've all said a version of: I want people to know who is kicking their ass! Even more, Gladiators come in all shapes and sizes, you'll be surprised who turns out to be a Gladiator in your class.

studies show leaderboards that use a person's real name aren't very motivating. Leaderboards that allow players to be totally anonymous are not motivating either. The most motivating leaderboard is the one where players are pseudonymous. To better motivate our students, they will need to make **Learner Tags**.

When our kids game at home, they are asked to make a Gamertag: the name they want to go by online. We are going to do the same thing. I use a Google Form to ask students what they want their Learner Tag to be. Below you can see the column on my leaderboard that displays students' Learner Tags. Learner Tags are a must!

Spendable AP	Learner Tag	XP	Level	Period	Guild
	Possible Points:	35,500		Last Updated:	Final Update!
740	KoalaTea	34,090	41.5	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1290	Moon	33,665	46.6	Period 2A	
940	Dnroxxie	33,655	43.1	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1160	NYC98	33,600	48.2	Period 2B	MSkittles
1090	AppleKacs	33,485	45.4	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
1265	PrincessPeach	33,470	46.1	Period 2A	
1135	Purple2498	33,470	45.8	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
985	Garrett	33,330	45.2	Period 2B	PNerds
1265	Eleanor Rigby	33,250	45.9	Period 2A	
1000	ToxicAngel4	33,215	45.2	Period 2B	CM&Ms
1040	Star	33,185	44.6	Period 2A	
1015	Momobus13	33,120	43.3	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
645	TheShadow	33,115	43.6	Period 3A	Dode
1085	NavyBlue2	33,070	43.9	Period 2B	MSkittles
930	Cookie26	33,050	43.4	Period 3A	Dode
985	Green129	33,015	43.9	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
1260	Captain America	32,895	45.5	Period 2B	MSkittles
985	DrivenByMuzic	32,890	42.7	Period 3A	AllThatGlitterIsGuild
1095	The Mighty Condor	32,885	43.8	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
975	TMaguire98	32,875	42.6	Period 2B	24
1025	Go Bengals	32,845	43.1	Period 2B	CM&Ms
950	Monroe	32,830	42.3	Period 2B	PNerds
1080	FPSaddict	32,815	44.6	Period 2B	24
880	Katrina.Dagosto	32,790	41.6	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas

1.22 Straight Grade Competition

The first part of our leaderboard focuses on two things 1) Straight Grade Competition and 2) Finding Epic Wins. **Straight Grade Competition** means the first part of our leaderboard focuses solely on grades. Whoever is doing the best in the class, as with a traditional

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

leaderboard, will be doing the best on this part of the leaderboard. In the below image, you will see what Straight Grade Competition looks like on my leaderboard:

Spendable AP	Learner Tag	XP	Level	Period	Guild
	Possible Points:	35,500		Last Updated:	Final Update!
740	KoalaTea	34,090	41.5	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1290	Moon	33,665	46.6	Period 2A	:
940	Dnroxxie	33,655	43.1	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1160	NYC98	33,600	48.2	Period 2B	MSkittles
1090	AppleKacs	33,485	45.4	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
1265	PrincessPeach	33,470	46.1	Period 2A	:
1135	Purple2498	33,470	45.8	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
985	Garrett	33,330	45.2	Period 2B	PNerds
1265	Eleanor Rigby	33,250	45.9	Period 2A	:
1000	ToxicAngel4	33,215	45.2	Period 2B	CM&Ms
1040	Star	33,185	44.6	Period 2A	:
1015	Momobus13	33,120	43.3	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
645	TheShadow	33,115	43.6	Period 3A	Dode
1085	NavyBlue2	33,070	43.9	Period 2B	MSkittles
930	Cookie26	33,050	43.4	Period 3A	Dode
985	Green129	33,015	43.9	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
1260	Captain America	32,895	45.5	Period 2B	MSkittles
985	DrivenByMuzic	32,890	42.7	Period 3A	AllThatGlitterIsGuild
1095	The Mighty Condor	32,885	43.8	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
975	TMaguire98	32,875	42.6	Period 2B	24
1025	Go Bengals	32,845	43.1	Period 2B	CM&Ms
950	Monroe	32,830	42.3	Period 2B	PNerds
1080	FPSaddict	32,815	44.6	Period 2B	24
880	Katrina.Dagosto	32,790	41.6	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas

The Total Points in the XP column are taken from my gradebook. Most gradebooks allow you to copy the numbers right from the gradebook and paste them into the spreadsheet, so you shouldn't have to enter them manually. In the above picture, if you divided the points earned by KoalaTea on the leaderboard (34,090xp) by the total points they could have earned (35,500xp), you will get their grade - 96 an A. KoalaTea was winning the Straight Grade Competition with a 96. Her next closest competitor, Moon, has a 94.8. Tight race!

Your Achievers and Gladiators will be motivated by this student vs. student part of the Straight Grade Competition. You'll also find that some students will *make* their own motivation even if they are not at the top of the leaderboard. If a student is doing better than their friends, that sometimes can be enough to motivate them, but we can do better. We can find Epic Wins for our students!

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

1.23 - Finding Epic Wins in Straight Grade Competition

Think back to an awesome moment in your life. Winning a big game. Seeing something beautiful, unbelievable, or a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing. Think of a time when the stars perfectly aligned to create one of those too good to be true moments or a time you built something special. Were you lucky enough to share those experiences with someone? Do you still talk to them about those moments today? The best part of any experience is sharing it with someone else. Something really cool happens in a gamified classroom: it too becomes a shared experience. By uniting students by class and small groups, we can create a shared experience, especially within these small groups.

I put my students into **Guilds** - my gamified name for small groups. Guilds have 2-5 members, and students picked their own Guilds. Guilds stayed together for the entire year. Students could not leave a Guild once they joined. The ones doing the talking are the ones doing the learning, so my students have presentations due nearly every week. Every year, Guilds take on a life of their own. First, it starts with Guild names. Then comes entrance music, Guild Flags, and outfits. One year, it ended with a Guild shooting off confetti cannons after a particularly exciting Guild presentation. Like on their sports teams, it was fun to watch my kids turn class into a shared experience.

Groups like Guilds and classes are a way we can help more students find Epic Wins. Only one student can win the Straight Grade Competition. We can make the Straight Grade Competition have more Epic Wins by grouping students together. That way more people can win. We keep students in their Guilds for the year to nurture a shared experience and foster teamwork. Teamwork requires vital soft skills we need to help students develop. How do kids develop those skills if we are constantly changing their group, or worse, let them abandon their group at the first sign of adversity?

Students really couldn't leave a Guild. Even when parents emailed, I asked them to give me the chance to help the Guild work it out, explaining to parents how it would be a life lesson. I can't tell you how many Guild therapy sessions I hosted. Boyfriend/girlfriend, he said/she said drama. You name it, I dealt with it. No one died and I think they became better people by the end of the year because they learned to communicate and compromise.

No Tech Tip - Laminating blank sheets of paper or poster board and using them to create a leaderboard on the wall or whiteboard is a great way to go techless. Dry erase marker can easily be wiped away and scores rewritten when you are ready to update your leaderboards. If you put Guild names and scores on their own slices of paper, you can move them up or down on the board to show who is winning on the leaderboard.

For elementary school aged students, I recommend rotating groups at a more frequent, but predictable interval. I think it is important that younger kids get to socialize and work with a variety of students. I aim to keep elementary school groups together for a minimum of two

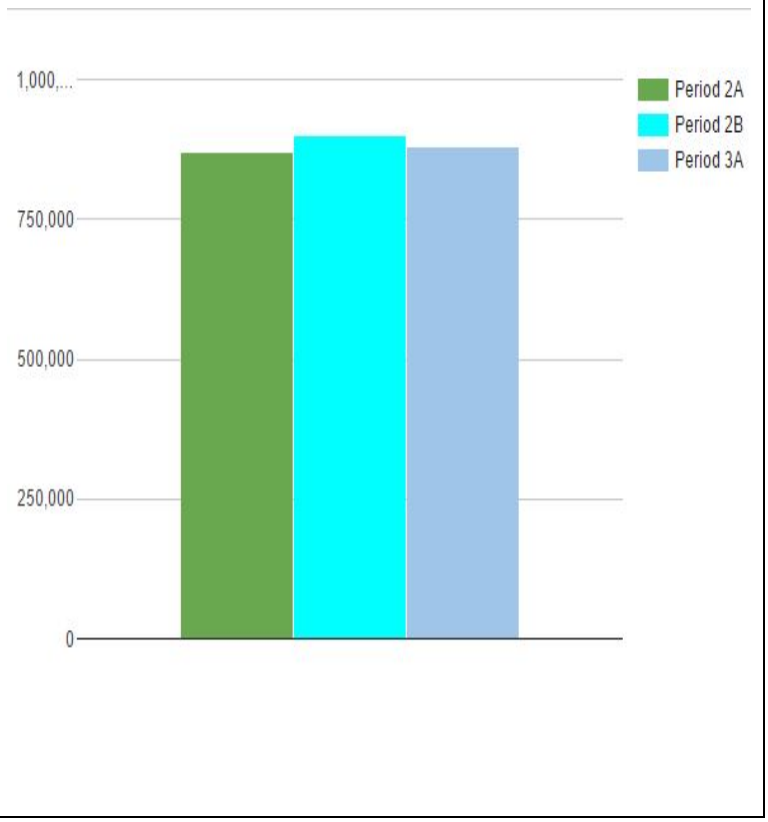
©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

projects. Regardless of age, you will see that when you keep students together in groups for multiple projects, roles and expertise will emerge.

Grouping students by class is exactly what it sounds like. Students not only took part in a Guild vs. Guild competition within a class, but also in a Class vs. Class competition. Whether you group students by Guild, Class, or both, the way the competition works is the same: every Quest a student completes earns them XP. This XP is added to their Guildmates and Classmates XP and charted on the Leaderboard. Even if students are working on something in singleplayer mode like a Side Quest or Epic Quest, the XP they earn is added to the Guild/Class score. Don't worry, my leaderboard will do this automatically for you. Here and below you can see the Guild vs. Guild and Class vs. Class section of the leaderboard and the corresponding bar graphs my leaderboard creates to help students see who is winning.

Class vs. Class Leaderboard and bar graph

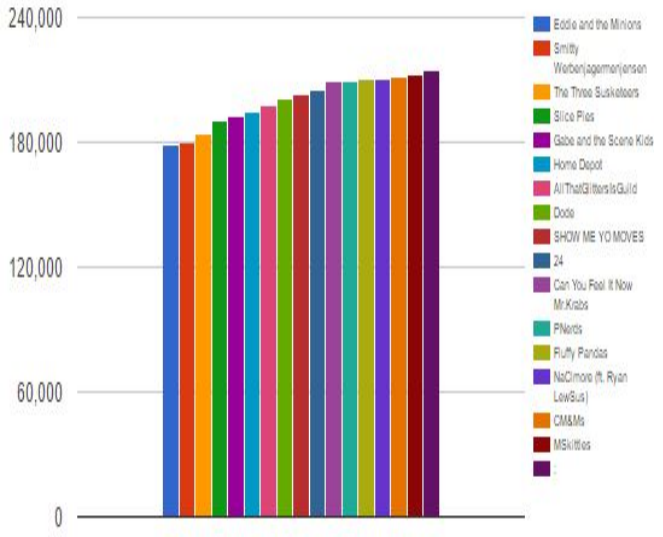
Spendable AP	Learner Tag	XP	Level	Period	Guild
	Possible Points:	35,500		Last Updated:	Final Update!
740	KoalaTea	34,090	41.5	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1290	Moon	33,665	46.6	Period 2A	
940	Dnroxxie	33,655	43.1	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1160	NYC98	33,600	48.2	Period 2B	MSkittles
1090	AppleKacs	33,485	45.4	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
1265	PrincessPeach	33,470	46.1	Period 2A	
1135	Purple2498	33,470	45.8	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
985	Garrett	33,330	45.2	Period 2B	PNerds
1265	Eleanor Rigby	33,250	45.9	Period 2A	
1000	ToxicAngel4	33,215	45.2	Period 2B	CM&Ms
1040	Star	33,185	44.6	Period 2A	
1015	Momobus13	33,120	43.3	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
645	TheShadow	33,115	43.6	Period 3A	Dode
1085	NavyBlue2	33,070	43.9	Period 2B	MSkittles
930	Cookie26	33,050	43.4	Period 3A	Dode
985	Green129	33,015	43.9	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
1260	Captain America	32,895	45.5	Period 2B	MSkittles
985	DrivenByMuzic	32,890	42.7	Period 3A	AllThatGlitterIsGuild
1095	The Mighty Condor	32,885	43.8	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
975	TMaguire98	32,875	42.6	Period 2B	24
1025	Go Bengals	32,845	43.1	Period 2B	CM&Ms
950	Monroe	32,830	42.3	Period 2B	PNerds
1080	FPSaddict	32,815	44.6	Period 2B	24
880	Katrina Dagosto	32,790	41.6	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas



©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

Guild vs. Guild Leaderboard and bar graph

Spendable AP	Learner Tag	XP	Level	Period	Guild
	Possible Points:	35,500		Last Updated:	Final Update!
740	KoalaTea	34,090	41.5	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1290	Moon	33,665	46.6	Period 2A	:
940	Dnroxxie	33,655	43.1	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1160	NYC98	33,600	48.2	Period 2B	MSkittles
1090	AppleKacs	33,485	45.4	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
1265	PrincessPeach	33,470	46.1	Period 2A	:
1135	Purple2498	33,470	45.8	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
985	Garrett	33,330	45.2	Period 2B	PNerds
1265	Eleanor Rigby	33,250	45.9	Period 2A	:
1000	ToxicAngel4	33,215	45.2	Period 2B	CM&Ms
1040	Star	33,185	44.6	Period 2A	:
1015	Momobus13	33,120	43.3	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
645	TheShadow	33,115	43.6	Period 3A	Dode
1085	NavyBlue2	33,070	43.9	Period 2B	MSkittles
930	Cookie26	33,050	43.4	Period 3A	Dode
985	Green129	33,015	43.9	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
1260	Captain America	32,895	45.5	Period 2B	MSkittles
985	DrivenByMuzic	32,890	42.7	Period 3A	AllThatGlitterIsGuild
1095	The Mighty Condor	32,885	43.8	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
975	TMaguire98	32,875	42.6	Period 2B	24
1025	Go Bengals	32,845	43.1	Period 2B	CM&Ms
950	Monroe	32,830	42.3	Period 2B	PNerds
1080	FPSaddict	32,815	44.6	Period 2B	24
880	Katrina Dagosto	32,790	41.6	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas



I enjoy working by myself, but I also understand that most of our students will work in multiplayer environments when they get older. Developing the ability to work in a group is important, even if they might not enjoy it. Sometimes we teachers have to push our students out of their comfort zones. While not all Quests in my classroom are multiplayer, it is not possible to only have a singleplayer experience either. Moderation is key. If the idea of year-long groups doesn't appeal to you, try semester or quarterly groups.

Finally, just like Learner Tags, you can (and should) allow students to name their Guilds. It is a little bit harder to name classes, as getting an entire class to agree was hard, but it's not impossible. I would refer to my classes as Houses and each

The Team of Misfit Toys? - Don't make or allow students to pick their Guilds on the first day of school. Wait a few weeks. Get a feel for each class and each student. If you feel like some students may not be picked to be in a Guild, don't put lump them together as part of a team of misfit toys. Studies shows us that the best thing to do is put these students in your more outgoing groups. A shy student will not diminish an outgoing group, the outgoing group will encourage a shy student. Only twice I had students I believed wouldn't be picked to be in a Guild. Both times I asked students in class I already knew before the year started to invite the passed over student into their group if it looked like they wouldn't be picked. Both times the student assimilated into the group seamlessly and had a positive experience. Relationships matter.

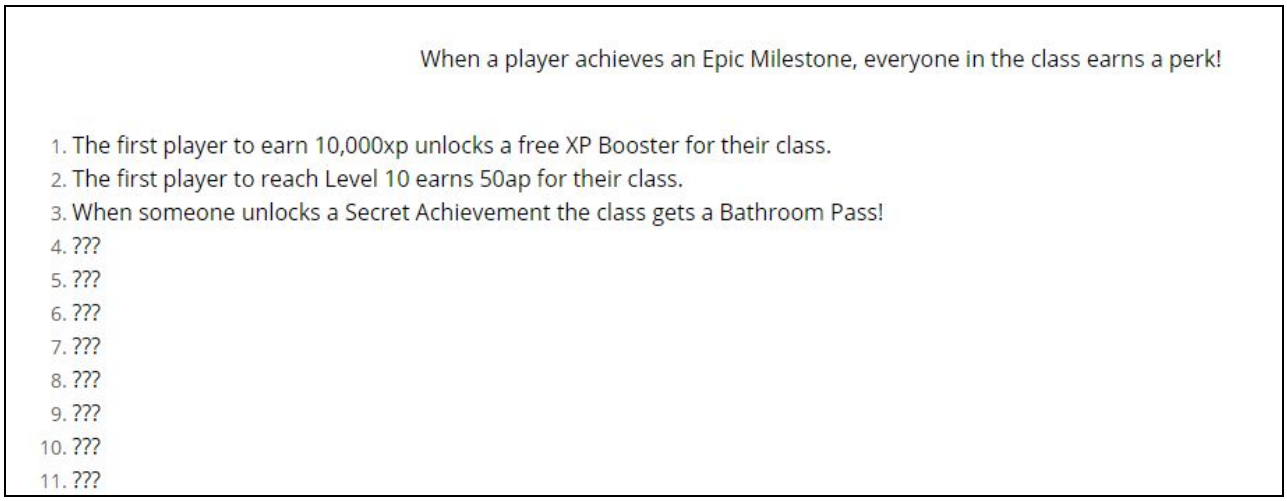
©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

class would come up with a House name (Go, House Lannister!).

The moral of the story is to allow students to take ownership of their Guild (and Class if you are up to the challenge) by picking them, naming them, and helping them find Epic Wins on the Leaderboard.

1.24 - Adding Perks

The first part of our leaderboard has focused on Straight Grade Competition. I've had years where my kids have become too competitive. Instead of rooting for each other, they started to root against each other. To temper competition that gets out of hand, I employ **Perks**. When a student reaches an **Epic Milestone** everyone gets something. With Perks, I've found kids are more excited when they see a peer being successful. Rather than knocking them down, they will root for them. Perks can be hung on the wall of the classroom, or better, given a page on your class website. [Here's mine](#).


When a player achieves an Epic Milestone, everyone in the class earns a perk!

1. The first player to earn 10,000xp unlocks a free XP Booster for their class.
2. The first player to reach Level 10 earns 50ap for their class.
3. When someone unlocks a Secret Achievement the class gets a Bathroom Pass!
4. ???
5. ???
6. ???
7. ???
8. ???
9. ???
10. ???
11. ???

The above screenshot from [my site](#) shows what types of actions can become Perks. As, I'll explain better in the Achievements stage, it is important that whatever Epic Milestone you choose to reward with Perks is objective.

1.25 - The Power of "???"

The other thing to note in the Perks screenshot is the use of **???**. I can't begin to imagine all the cool things my students will do in a year and I'm not talented enough to come up with all the Perks at once. The use of the unknown, what the ??? represents, does two things: 1) it gives me the opportunity to be flexible with Perks (and other game mechanics) 2) ??? appeals to our students' sense of adventure, especially our Explorers. My kids have tried so many fun things and really pushed themselves out of their comfort zones in an effort to uncover

what is behind the ???. As you'll see in the next section, Achievements, the unknown is a powerful mechanic to add into your Gamified Classroom.

1.3 - Achievements

In gamification, Badges are used to convey feedback and highlight the mastery of a new skill. We are going to take Badges to the next level. This starts by never saying the word Badges. When I first started gamifying, I would excitedly tell kids they had earned a Badge. In return, I got blank stares. Most students have no idea what Badges are because when they are playing video games at home they aren't earning badges, they are **Unlocking Achievements**. As with everything else, you are free to call Badges what you like and deploy them as you see fit, but in my experience, telling students they have unlocked an achievement is more universally understood and motivating than anything else.

1.31 The Anatomy of an Achievement

Creating quality Achievements is a lot harder than it may seem. Before we talk about what makes a good Achievement, it is really important that you know what makes for a bad Achievement.

When I first started gamifying, I made some really bad Achievements. Looking back, I'm not sure what I was thinking. To save yourself this pain, it is important that you understand the two factors that led to bad Achievements in my system:

1. **Rewarding Achievements for Grades -** We have our Straight Grade Competition piece as part of the Leaderboard to motivate our Gladiators and Achievers. There is absolutely no reason to make your Achievements a reward for good grades. In fact, I forbid it! You are not allowed to give an Achievement for getting an A on a test, getting the best grade, nor winning anything on the Leaderboard. As you will see, it is vital to my system that your Achievements have nothing to do with grades. Besides, getting a good grade or being first on the Leaderboard is its own reward. **Achievements are for the Socializers and Explorers!**

2. **Subjective Achievements -** Games are supposed to be fair. Everyone plays by the same rules. Gamification fails if you create an unfair system. I see a lot of teachers rewarding Badges for things like helping or being nice. How do you measure helping? How do you track being nice? I can't tell you how many horror stories I've heard where a teacher gives a Badge for being nice and other students revolt because the teacher missed their being nice or they think they were being more nice, longer than the kid who earned the Nice Badge. **If you can't prove it, if you can't measure it, if it is not objective, it cannot be an Achievement!**

So what makes for a good Achievement?

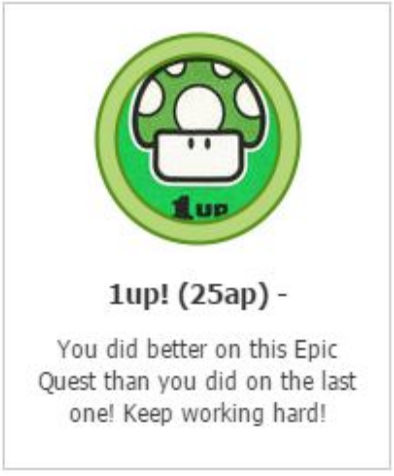
©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

My Achievements reward **Heroic Deeds** and **Heroic Traits**. Heroic Deeds is when my kids do something awesome. Heroic Traits are when my kids use soft skills in a meaningful way. Neither Heroic Deeds nor Heroic Traits have anything to do with getting good grades. Achievements should help us build relationships, acknowledge actions that usually go ignored throughout the school day, and motivate students to continue to develop the soft skills and actions that are going to be so important for their futures.

Teachers want to reward their kids for helping, improving, and doing well in class. We can do that with Achievements, but we have to find an objective way students can show they are doing those things. I think it's time for examples:

En Fuego! - Getting a good grade is a reward in and of itself. Instead of rewarding good grades, I use the En Fuego! Achievement to reward *consistency*. If a student shows *consistency* over their last three Quests by earning 3 As, 3 Bs, or 3 Cs in a row, they unlock the En Fuego! Achievement.

1up! - The 1up! Achievement pairs nicely with the En Fuego Achievement since it rewards *improvement*. We aren't rewarding the grade itself, we are rewarding the act of doing better than last time. Since students earn 1up! by improving their grades and earn En Fuego! by being consistent with their grades, it is a nice combo to improve motivation. Note the Growth Mindset-flavored language "keep working hard." Try to include it where you can.



©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

Taken - I had a student come into class one day with a horrible cut on her arm. It was a gash that ran from elbow to wrist, bleeding everywhere. I nearly fell out of my chair. She laughed. The cut was fake. She made it using papier mâché, paint, and makeup. It was for their Edgar Allan Poe movie I assigned them. The rest of the class came in and marveled at the cut. Every Guild asked her to help them with their movie makeup. I watched this girl, this Socializer, fill up every weekend for a month. Where in school do we recognize her movie makeup skills or her willingness to help? Nowhere. Thus, Taken was born. Taken is how I reward *helping*. I'm not rewarding the act of helping, I'm rewarding the skill that the student provides when they help others. Think, what does helping look like in your class? Then figure out how to reward the action.

Early Bird - I hate it when my students wait until the last minute to do their work. I use Early Bird to motivate students to turn their work in *early*. Simple and easy to reward. It either is or is not turned in 24 hours early.

These are just a few of the Achievements I find useful. Hopefully, they illustrate how to design good Achievements. You can find more Achievements on my site.

1.32 Using Achievements Effectively

Now that you have designed your Achievements, how do you use them?

Achievements are used in games as a **feedback loop**. For feedback loops to be effective the feedback must be delivered as close to the action it addresses as possible. The longer we wait to deliver the Achievement the less it means. I use my phone and the Schoology App to deliver Achievements to students almost immediately. My goal is to get students their Achievements by the end of the day at the latest. Whether you use an LMS like Schoology or

something else, you'll need to figure out a way to get students their Achievements as quickly as possible.

To further make Achievements more effective as a feedback loop, Achievements should have a title and definition on them. Students need to be reminded what the Achievement is and for what action they earned it.

Studies, and my own experiments, tell us that displaying Achievements (and Leaderboards) publically is more motivating than keeping them private. Again, I used Schoology to display Achievements publically. Hanging Achievements on the wall works or having students post them to their blogs or digital portfolios works too.

Achievements should be worth points. These points should be different than the XP students earn for doing work. They should be worth points for two reasons: 1) so we can keep track of them on the Leaderboard and 2) the points will act as class currency for our Item Shop. I call points from earning Achievements **Achievement Points (AP)**.

We want to make sure that we have some Achievements that are really easy to earn. Holden Strong! is an Achievement earned when students finish my Catcher in the Rye Level (more on Levels later). Holden Strong! has nothing to do with what grade they get on the Level; students must simply finish the Level. Conversely, the Iron Bladder! Mega Achievement is awarded to students who don't go to the bathroom all marking period. By offering incredibly easy Achievements for low AP and hard Achievements for more AP, you will motivate a variety of kids. The harder the Achievement, the more AP it is worth. I usually use 10, 25, and 50AP tiers.

Just like we did with Perks, it is important to have Secret Achievements. I never know what amazing things my students are going to do each year. It's important that I have Secret Achievements for flexibility. For example, one of my kids shared an interactive timeline he made for a Quest on Twitter. It got hundreds of Retweets. The next day, he came to class swelling with pride. There is no way I could have predicted that would have happen, so when he told me I excitedly informed him he unlocked the Viral! Achievement. He was thrilled, and I ran to my computer a few minutes later and created the Achievement because it didn't exist. Had I not had the flexibility of Secret Achievements, I would have missed out on the opportunity to recognize my students Heroic Deed. One year, I had

Less Is More - The first iteration of my gamified classroom had over a 120 Achievements. By the end of the year I had 30. The 120 Achievements were too hard to keep up with. You are better off having fewer Achievements that you can reliably award than too many Achievements. Consistency is key in gamification!

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

a Guild sing their entire presentation hoping it would unlock an Achievement. It is amazing what students will try, especially Explorers, to unlock a Secret Achievement. Secret Achievements initially start out as ??? on the class Achievement page. Once a Secret Achievement is unlocked, it becomes visible and any student can earn it afterwards, usually for a reduced amount of AP. Finally, don't be afraid to get silly with your Secret Achievements. You can see on Saga City there are quite a few ridiculous Secret Achievements.

The last thing we need to make sure of is that our Achievements are diverse. I use something I call the Achievement Spectrum to stay organized.

1.33 The Achievement Spectrum

	Singleplayer	**Guild**	**Class**
Noob (10ap)			
Heroic (25ap)			
Epic (50ap)	• Holden Strong!		• Unity!
Mega (250ap)	• Iron Bladder! • Always Here!		
Secret (10-50ap)	• On Blast!	• Viral!	

I use a table like this one to make sure I am deploying a diverse array of Achievements. It helps me track how many Achievements I have, how much they are worth, and to ensure they are of varying difficulty. If you are particularly organized, you can link each Achievement to its own Google Doc that has the image and description of the Achievement on it. The Achievement Spectrum acts as the Master Doc for all your Achievement needs.

The Achievement Spectrum also helps me visualize my Achievements. I generally use shapes and colors to denote different Achievement types. I use Bronze, Silver, Gold to denote difficulty and shapes like a circle for singleplayer, square for Guild, and stars for Class Achievements.

There are a number of resources that will help you design and disseminate Achievements. My personal favorite is Schoology since it has everything I could ever want in a gamified LMS. Rezzly, formerly 3D Gamelabs, is another great LMS with Achievement-making abilities. Some other sites to help you design Achievements are Credly, Open Badges, Online Badge Maker, Canva, this handy site, and Google Drawings.

No Tech Tip - A great way to go techless with Achievements is to buy some baseball card holders like these. Design your Achievements to be the size of baseball cards, 2½ inches by 3½ inches. When a student earns an Achievement, print it out and have them place it in their baseball card holder. When they fill up the baseball card holder, they can pick something from

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

the Item Shop. No AP to track and no Achievements to manage digitally. You can even hang the baseball card holders up easily for everyone to admire.

1.34 Tracking Achievements on the Leaderboard with Levels

Since students start the year without AP and accumulate it as they Unlock Achievements, it is easy to track AP gain on the Leaderboard. My Leaderboard does this for you automatically. There are 600 lines of code in the backend of the Leaderboard that will pull students' Learner Tags, Guilds, and Class into an App that will let you assign them AP. The App then runs a formula that automatically generates a student's Level (Level = AP+XP/1000) and charts that Level on the Leaderboard for you. If you don't use my Leaderboard, make sure you find a way to display a student's Level. It's important.

Spendable AP	Learner Tag	XP	Level	Period	Guild
	Possible Points:	35,500		Last Updated:	Final Update!
740	KoalaTea	34,090	41.5	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1290	Moon	33,665	46.6	Period 2A	
940	Dnroxxie	33,655	43.1	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas
1160	NYC98	33,600	48.2	Period 2B	MSkittles
1090	AppleKacs	33,485	45.4	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
1265	PrincessPeach	33,470	46.1	Period 2A	
1135	Purple2498	33,470	45.8	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
985	Garrett	33,330	45.2	Period 2B	PNerds
1265	Eleanor Rigby	33,250	45.9	Period 2A	
1000	ToxicAngel4	33,215	45.2	Period 2B	CM&Ms
1040	Star	33,185	44.6	Period 2A	
1015	Momobus13	33,120	43.3	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
645	TheShadow	33,115	43.6	Period 3A	Dode
1085	NavyBlue2	33,070	43.9	Period 2B	MSkittles
930	Cookie26	33,050	43.4	Period 3A	Dode
985	Green129	33,015	43.9	Period 3A	NaClmore (ft. Ryan LewSus)
1260	Captain America	32,895	45.5	Period 2B	MSkittles
985	DrivenByMuzic	32,890	42.7	Period 3A	AllThatGlitterIsGuild
1095	The Mighty Condor	32,885	43.8	Period 2B	Can You Feel It Now Mr.Krabs
975	TMaguire98	32,875	42.6	Period 2B	24
1025	Go Bengals	32,845	43.1	Period 2B	CM&Ms
950	Monroe	32,830	42.3	Period 2B	PNerds
1080	FPSaddict	32,815	44.6	Period 2B	24
880	Katrina.Dagosto	32,790	41.6	Period 2A	Fluffy Pandas

It is important that we track Level on the Leaderboard because it motivates our Socializers and Explorers since unlocking Achievements and earning AP have nothing to do with good grades. It also motivates our Gladiators and Achievers since it is another competition

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

that they can participate in. Achievements also help manage student behavior, which is why we made them worth a separate amount of points. This AP will act as class currency in our Item Shop.

1.4 The Item Shop

Most video games allow you to earn points or currency to spend in a store. In this store, players can buy items to make themselves more powerful such as new weapons or armor, abilities, or superpowers. Many MMORPGs take it a step further and create an entire in-game economy with player trading. They even employ real economists to make sure their video game economy runs smoothly. For some games, the in-game economy and trading *is* the entire game. Needless to say, stores are a big deal and an important part of many video games. They add a whole new dimension of fun to a game that appeals to a diverse array of players. In the section on Achievements, I encouraged you to create a unique points system to award students when they earn an Achievement. Using these Achievement Points (AP), we are going to create a classroom economy.

Chances are you, fair teacher, already have a classroom economy. Many teachers I know reward points for things like behavior or completing work. Sometimes students earn these points as individuals other times it is a whole-class thing. These points often earn students a trip to the prize bucket, a homework pass, snack, or pizza party for the whole class. Stuff can be motivating, but we teachers often miss out on opportunities to better motivate our students with game mechanics that go beyond “stuff”.

The business world already knows what motivates their consumers: **SAPS**. Originally created by Gabe Zichermann, SAPS is defined, in order from most motivating to least motivating, as:

- **Status -** Recognition and appreciation
- **Access -** Access to experiences not everyone can enjoy. The VIP treatment.
- **Power -** The ability to control themselves and others. Influence.
- **Stuff -** Tangible rewards

With SAPS in mind, we can create a more motivating class store. I call my class store the **Item Shop** and it's where students spend the AP they earn from Unlocking Achievements. Since the Leaderboard and Achievements provide most of the Status in our classroom and Stuff isn’t very motivating, we are going to build our class store around Access and Power Items.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

1.41 - Gamify Attendance

The first thing we want to do to get our Item Shop off the ground is to gamify attendance. Gamifying your attendance is important for two reasons:

1) There aren't many studies on the power of gamified attendance, but the ones that are out there are proving that if you gamify attendance, students will show up more. In the studies I've read, it seems students are 10-20% more likely to show up to class if you gamify attendance. A few years ago, I dug into my gradebook and compared student absences before and after I gamified attendance. My students were 18% more likely to show up to class after I gamified attendance than before I gamified attendance. You can't teach a kid if they don't show up for school. Gamifying attendance motivates students to show up.

2) Because we are gamifying attendance, we can get an idea on how to appropriately price the Items in our Item Shop.

My gamified attendance goes like this: when one of my kids comes to class they earn the *Here!* Achievement worth 10AP. If an entire Guild shows up to class they all earn 25AP instead of the 10. If my whole class shows up, everyone earns 50AP. If a student doesn't miss a day during the marking period, they earn the Mega Achievement version of Here! worth 100AP. You can get away with rewarding just the individual for showing up, but I've found the extra incentive of rewarding a whole Guild or Class when they show up better motivates my students.

1.42 Pricing the Item Shop

Most states require 180 days of school. If a student never misses a day of school and earns no other Achievements but the *Here!* Achievements, they will accumulate 2200AP (180 days x 10AP per day + 400AP for the Mega Achievement) for the school year. Knowing this allows us to start trying to find the sweet spot at which to price Items in the Item Shop.

It won't be easy to find the sweet spot. If things are too expensive students will not be able to buy things often which frustrates them. If things are too cheap, students will be buying things like crazy which decreases the motivation of the Item Shop and tracking will be a pain for you. It took me three years to get the pricing right when I taught Sophomore English, but I eventually found it. This is the pricing I will use in this section, but know just because it

Flash Sale - I'll talk more about **Events** and how to use them in the other Stages, but one Event that is fun and useful to use in conjunction with the Item Shop is the Flash Sale. Via whatever means I was using to communicate with students at the time, (Twitter, email, Schoology's mobile app, Remind) I would let them know for the next *X* amount of time *N* Item would be on sale. This helps create a buzz about class, adds to the fun and culture, and helps hook some reluctant students into the game.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

worked for me doesn't mean it will work for you. You will have to find your own price point, so let me tell you the most important thing I learned about pricing Items: **it is better to be more expensive than too cheap.** Besides being easier to manage and more motivating than if things were too cheap, you can always make your Items cheaper. You can't make them more expensive. Remember, gamification works as long as it is fair. Taking Items and making them more expensive isn't fair, but if you start out too expensive and then make your Items cheaper, you will be a hero instead of the villain to your kids.

1.43 Items for the Item Shop

The goal of the Item Shop is to provide Access and Power to our students to increase motivation and improve the student experience. It can be hard to think of Items to sell in the shop, but beyond creating Access and Power to improve the SX, I keep three things in mind when I'm trying to think of Items to sell:

1. You are giving students things for free that should have a cost.
2. Items should make my life as a teacher easier.
3. Items should provide students a way to fix mistakes or take the sting out of failure.

If you keep these three things in mind, you'll find that the Item Shop is amazing because the gamification starts to **go from motivating to empowering**. The Item Shop empowers students. Things that use to be gray area problems become black and white. Students either have the points for the Item or they don't. No debate. Students either want to spend the points for the Item or they don't. They are the ones with the power. They make the decisions. They are given the same autonomy that they get in video games. And because the only way to earn AP is through Unlocking Achievements for performing Heroic Deeds and displaying Heroic Traits it creates its own feedback loop that had my students trying new things, controlling their own path to learning, and showing they were happier than they've ever been in my class.

Dying of Dehydration with a Canteen of Full of Water - Since so many of the Items in the Item Shop are a student's *Get Out of Jail Free Card*, it's not unusual for them to horde AP. Most of my students will finish the year with quite a bit of AP unspent. If students aren't spending a lot of their AP on Items, don't panic. It's a sign of a well made Item Shop.

In the next section are some of the most useful Items I sell in my Item Shop and their costs. The more expensive an Item is, the more valuable it is perceived to be. As with everything else, more examples can be found on the example gamification site: Saga City Learning.

1.44 Access Items

Music Pass (100AP) – My students enjoy listening to music when working independently. Before I gamified, I just let students listen to music while they worked. Now, listening to music costs AP. This was an a-ha moment for me: I was giving away things for free that should be in my Item Shop! Many more soon followed.

Bathroom Pass (100AP) – This is probably the most controversial Item I sell. I wouldn't do this lower than third grade, and I encourage you to experiment and feel this out before fully implementing it. It works well for me, but your mileage may vary. I allow my students to go to the bathroom in the first three minutes of class at no cost, after that it costs 100AP. Students learned to either come to class early or go to the bathroom in another teacher's class (Sorry, not sorry). Kids will challenge you, but stick to your guns. The phrase that pays when students say, "Can I go to the bathroom?" is "Sure, if you want to spend the points." In fact, **this phrase is useful for any debate in your Gamified classroom because it puts the onus on them**. I was shocked how little students went to the bathroom; they wanted to save their points for something more worthwhile. What if a student has to go to the bathroom and doesn't have enough points? **A tip**: On the first day of school, give out an Achievement that just so happens to be worth enough for a student to go to the bathroom. That way, every student has a Bathroom Pass in the bank and you start off the year on a positive note with a first-day Achievement.

Print Pass (200AP) – My kids were always asking to print something for my class or another teacher's class. It drove me nuts. What better way to handle this problem than to charge them. Students started to print at home. If they forgot to print at home, at least they had a way to fix their mistake.

Student Voice - It should come as no surprise, but students will come up with great Achievements, Items, and elements to add to the class. Let your students have a voice in how the game plays!

Tipping Point (600AP) – How many times has a student come to you and said some variation of, "I have a 92.3, what can I do to get an A?" Most schools have no set rule for this problem and I am faced with a moral dilemma every time I'm asked. If a student has worked hard to earn his or her on-the-fence average, I'm inclined to give the the grade as a way of rewarding hard work. Other times, students who have learned how to "play school" or haven't worked their hardest want the same treatment. So what did I used to do before gamification? I had them write a paper, of course! Which, ultimately, just punished me with more papers to grade. With Tipping Point,

students can save up their AP and use them at the end of the marking period to push their grade to the next letter. This item is expensive because it's valuable, but it also provides a fair way to handle this issue. I typically kept it within .3 of the next letter grade.

Locker Pass (100AP) – Sometimes students forget things in their lockers. With a Locker Pass they can go retrieve them. If they don't have the AP points, they can't. It's a simple fix to a persistent problem. And make no mistake:not letting students get something from their lockers isn't fair.

Shout Out (200ap) – I am a huge fan of using Twitter in the classroom. Every teacher should be on Twitter. Students who buy Shout Out get to take over my Twitter account and Live Tweet the "goings-on" of our school day. Students learn about Digital Citizenship, parents love seeing what goes on in class, and I get to tease my kids about having more followers than they do. Win. Win. Win.

Me First (100ap) – You know these kids-our Achievers: "Did you grade my essay yet? Did you grade my test yet?" What better way to solve this problem than to give students the ability to buy the right to be graded first. I even use this one on parents. "I haven't gotten to your child's essay yet, but if they'd like to buy Me First, I will grade your child's work first."

Key (300AP) – In my blended classroom, students work independently on Levels (units). A Level is usually open for two weeks. Once a level is closed, the student is locked out and any work they did not complete receives a zero. With a Key, students can reopen the level and complete the work that they did not finish or even redo any work they wish to improve. This helps me provide a self-paced, self-directed student experience. The Key Item is a big part of *Stage 2: Leveling Up Instructional Design.*

Lunch Bunch (100AP) - I got this idea from an elementary school teacher. Students can buy Lunch Bunch and have lunch with me. I didn't think it would work in high school. It did. I ate lunch with my kids once a week. It was great.

Alliances - Guilds and classes will want to ally together to buy Items from the Item Shop. Let them! It makes for great political intrigue. Divide the AP cost of an Item among the allied participants so everyone pays their fair share.

Ten of my 12 years in education have been spent in high school. I'm just now starting to spend time in elementary and middle school classrooms. Most of these items would work in a middle school. In elementary school, I think jobs (line leader, caboose, board cleaner, etc.) and Items like Lunch Bunch, or something like first out to recess, last in from recess, first for show and tell would be great Items.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

1.45 Power Items

Slander (150AP) – By far, Slander is the most purchased Item in my Item Shop. Slander allows a student to change another Guild's name. When it comes to the Leaderboard, Guild projects, or anything else Guild related, whatever their name is slandered to is how I announced them. Kids love having the power to change a Guild's name. My favorite Slander story is the time when a Guild of basketball players thought that a Guild of football players changed their name to 0-26, which was the basketball team's record at
the time. In reality, it was a Guild of my quiet girls who changed the basketball Guild's name and started a war that lasted all year. A clever false-flag operation! **A tip**: Don't let a Gladiator sneak one by you. Check Urban Dictionary before you change a Guild's name!

Misnomer (200AP) – If your Guild is Slandered and you want to change your Guild's name back you have to buy Misnomer from the Item Shop. The funny thing? Misnomer costs more than Slander and no, Guilds cannot Slander themselves to save on the cost. This adds another level of Power to the class because if I Slander a Guild, and they want to change their name, it's a way for me to control and drain their AP usage. Most Guilds choose to live with their new name, but I've had Guilds who take themselves very seriously so they spend the AP to constantly change their name back. The whole Slander/Misnomer process is awesome and has been the highlight of the class for many of my kids.

Cena (150AP) - A verb and an Item named after the act of inserting WWE pro wrestler John Cena's entrance music into places it doesn't belong. Similar to Slander, before Guild presentations students can covertly buy the ability to change a Guild's entrance music. Whatever music they had planned to come out to is replaced by this new entrance music often to hilarious results.

Purge (150AP) – Similar to Slander, Guilds have the ability to steal XP from a Guild or Class with Purge. This knocks them down on the Leaderboard and makes for some creative Guild and Class alliances. My favorite Purge story is when an entire class banded together and spent a couple thousand AP to take almost all of the XP away from the first place class knocking them down to last place right at the end of the year. I loved watching the politics of the Guilds and Classes as they decide who to go after or attempted to negotiate truces. One year, a group of Guilds even wrote a treaty. It's this "Game of Thrones" dynamic that makes these types of Power Items more engaging than any stuff I could offer students.

Pen or Paper (50AP) – This is the only Stuff I give students. No drinks, no snacks, no trinkets, and definitely no Homework Passes. Rarely did a student ask me for pen or paper. They would rather borrow them from a friend than buy it with AP from me.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

Forgiveness (300AP) – When students are late handing in work we punish them with a late penalty. If students have earned enough AP through performing Heroic Deeds and Heroic Traits during the marking period, I feel they've earned the right to avoid this penalty. I allow students to remove the late penalty by buying Forgiveness.

Extend-O-Matic (300AP) - Kids have lives, too. Sometimes that life gets in the way of school. I want students to be proactive and plan ahead. If they think they may have a problem meeting a deadline, they can do something about it with the Extend-O-Matic Item.

XP Booster (400AP) - Extra Credit is a gray- area nightmare for many teachers. Most schools leave Extra Credit to teacher discretion. What's a teacher to do? XP Booster! A student can buy an XP Booster on any assignment throughout the marking period. An XP Booster gives students a 10% boost on any Quest they want, but they cannot go over the Total Points the Quest is worth. A student can choose to spend all their AP on XP Boosters if they want, it doesn't upset the system, and the great thing about that is that it's another form of Power. If a student is trying to win the XP Leaderboard battle by having the most XP points for the year and any other student wants to win too, it forces both to buy XP Boosters. I've seen some epic battles between students that has come down to smart management of AP and using XP Boosters at opportune times.

1.46 Powers

Like Perks, Powers are a totally voluntary system you can inject into your gamified classroom. Powers modify the Item Shop student experience. I got the idea when one of my kids came to me and asked if he could buy an Item from the Item Shop for his girlfriend for Valentine's Day. How romantic! I never anticipated being asked that, but if it's not illegal, immoral, or dangerous I let my kids do it. It also gave birth to the idea of Powers. For every 10th Level students earns on the Leaderboard, they can select from a list of Powers that change how Items act just for them. Some examples:

- **Tree Killer -** You can print assignments for another class with a Print Pass
- **Song Of My People -** When you buy a Music Pass it applies to your Guild
- **Malefactor -** You can Purge Guilds, not just classes, when you buy Purge
- **Benefactor -** You can use your AP to buy a gift for someone else
- **Double Agent -** You can Purge your own class
- **Jester -** Your Extend-O-Matic can be used to entertain your peers at the end of class

1.47 Tracking Items, Purchases, and Powers

While it may seem overwhelming, tracking Item purchases and Powers isn't that bad. If you use my Leaderboard, the tracking of Item Purchases is built-in to the app and spreadsheet. Whether you use my Leaderboard or not, you'll find that as you roll out your Gamified classroom

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

that you will cobble together an organization system that works for you. My Leaderboard, class website, sticky notes, and Google Forms were all I needed to run my class economy. Was it more work? Absolutely, but the benefits far outweighed the extra work I had to do.

Stage 1: Final Thoughts

This concludes Stage 1 of my 3 Stage Gamification System! I hope you found at least one or two things you can use in your classroom to improve the student experience. It took me about a month to write what you see here, and part of the reason I chose to make this an electronic guide rather than an actual book is so I can continue to modify, adapt, and grow this living document. Gamification is new, and I don't begin to believe I know everything about it. One thing I do know, and want to remind you of, is that this is how *I* like to gamify. I hope you will take what you read here and grow it into your own method, then come back and share it with me.

Stage 2: Leveling Up Instructional Design

In stage 2 of my gamification system, we take the work students get in class and turn it into Quests. By using pacing techniques, game flow concepts, and the game mechanics game designers use when building levels, we can deliver work to our students the same way a video game delivers Quests to the player!

Stage 3: The Classroom as an Experience

Stage 3 is the game changer. Video games are so compelling because they have a narrative and the player has a purpose; they are the chosen one. Often, our classrooms don't have a story. Using storytelling techniques, alternate reality game concepts, and, most powerfully, authentic learning experiences combined with networked narratives, we can add purpose to the work students' do in the classroom beyond "because I said so."

If you want to know more about Stage 2 and Stage 3, check out my blog or send me an email so we can work together!

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

Glossary

A list of terms and their definitions as used in The Gamification Guide.

1. **Access** - The ability to have experiences other people can't have and the second most powerful motivator of students.
2. **Achievement Points (AP)** - The points earned from unlocking achievements. AP act as class currency for the Item Shop.
3. **Achievements -** Recognition awarded to students for performing Heroic Deeds and displaying Heroic Traits.
4. **Achiever** - Students who are singleplayer minded and intrinsically motivated by competition and concrete measurements of success, namely grades.
5. **Alternate Reality Game (ARG) -** An interactive networked narrative that uses the real world as a platform and uses transmedia storytelling to deliver a story that may be altered by players' ideas or actions.
6. **Bartle's Taxonomy of Player Types -** A popular classification of video game players that can be applied to students
7. **Epic Meaning -** The feeling that students are part of something bigger and special when they are in your class
8. **Epic Milestone -** A noteworthy achievement accomplished during the course of the game.
9. **Epic Win -** The feeling of achievement or a job well done. A teacher's job in a Gamified Classroom is to help students find Epic Wins
10. **Events -** Activities or happenings on a variable reward schedule meant to excite and surprise students
11. **Experience Points (XP) -** The points earned for completing a Quest. XP take the place of traditional points in a Gamified Classroom and are used to determine the winner of the Straight Grade Competition portion of the Leaderboard.
12. **Explorer -** Students who are more interested in the journey than the finished product. They love to create and discover.
13. **Feedback Loop -** A system that provides students with information on their performance and the ability to change the performance for the better.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

14. **Flash Sale -** An Event that reduces the cost of Items in the Item Shop for a certain amount of time.
15. **Game-Based Learning** - Teaching and assessing with (video) games
16. **Gameful Learning** - Leveraging games in their many forms to improve instruction.
17. **Gamemaster** - The person who acts as an organizer, officiant for questions regarding rules, arbitrator, and moderator for a multiplayer role-playing game.
18. **Gamification** - The use of game mechanics and elements in non-game contexts like school.
19. **Gladiator -** Students who are extrinsically motivated by an audience and competition. Gladiators tend to be outgoing, risk takers, class clowns, and highly competitive.
20. **Guilds -** Gamified term for small student groups.
21. **Heroic Deeds -** When a student does something awesome
22. **Heroic Traits -** The powerful use of soft skills in the classroom
23. **Item Shop -** The Gamified class store where students spend class currency to buy Items that enhance the student experience.
24. **Learner Tags -** The pseudonymous nickname students use to identify themselves on the Leaderboard
25. **Learning Management System (LMS) -** software that allows at least part of your class to be administered online. An LMS is necessary to get the most out of a Gamified classroom.
26. **Level - A)** A combination of the XP and AP earned by a student. A student's Level can be seen on the Leaderboard and is a reflection of how well they are doing in the game. **B)** Level is also what I call a Unit of Instruction in my Gamified classroom.
27. **Loss Aversion -** People's preference to avoid losing something over gaining an equivalent thing.
28. **Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG) -** Games like World of Warcraft and Guild Wars where many people play online together. MMOs are an inspiration for the way I Gamify.
29. **Multiplayer -** Activities that involve multiple students
30. **Networked Narrative -** A story told through multiple access points; students can enter the narrative through multiple methods.
31. **Noob -** A potentially derogatory, slang term for someone who is new to something often used by gamers.
32. **Onboarding -** How we choose to introduce new information, skills, or behaviors to students
33. **Patch -** The ability to reflect on our Gamified Classrooms and find ways to improve the student experience.
34. **Perks** - Rewards given to the whole when a student, Guild, or Class achieves an Epic Milestone. Useful for tempering competition.
35. **Points, Badges, Leaderboard (PBL) -** A sometimes derogatory term used to express the very basics of gamification.

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

36. **Power -** The ability to have control over what happens to you and others. Power is the third most powerful motivator and is best thought of as voice and choice in the classroom.
37. **Reward Schedule -** The determining factors in when and if something happens in our Gamified Classroom.
38. **Singleplayer -** Involving just the student himself or herself often meant to denote an activity that is meant to be done just by one person rather than a Guild or Class.
39. **Socializer -** Students who are intrinsically motivated by building and maintaining relationships with people. Socializers are usually outgoing, thoughtful, and caring.
40. **Status -** The relative social standing of a student and the most powerful motivator of students. Status takes the form of appreciation and recognition and is derived from our Leaderboard and Achievements.
41. **Straight Grade Competition -** The portion of the Leaderboard and Gamified Classroom that is a purely grade-based competition.
42. **Student Experience (SX) -** Having its roots in Game Design, Design Thinking and the User Experience, the Student Experience is what I call the process of thinking about and gathering information on what it is like to be a student in our class and how we can make it more fun and exciting, like a game. Improving the SX is the end all, be all of the Gamified Classroom.
43. **Stuff -** Tangible rewards and the least powerful motivator of students.
44. **Transmedia Storytelling -** the act of telling a single story over multiple platforms and mediums. Transmedia Storytelling is the key to making a successful ARG.
45. **XP Grading** - Using Total Points grading and thematic vocabulary to create Epic Meaning.
46. **???** - The ??? in games represents the power of the unknown. A lot of fun can be had just by adding ??? in places you want kids to wonder about or try new things.

Resources

- People
    - Gamification Experts in the Real World
        - Yu-Kai Chou
        - Kevin Werbach
        - Jesse Schell
        - Richard Bartle
        - Jane McGonigal
        - Gabe Zichermann
    - Gamification Experts in the Classroom
        - Mike Matera
        - Matt Farber
        - Lee Sheldon
        - Paul Andersen

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com

    - Greg Toppo
    - MJ Linane
    - Sarah Thomas
- Useful Stuff
    - My Site - Techedupteacher.com
    - My Example Gamified Class Website - Saga City
    - The Leaderboard I Use to Gamify
    - Ms. Cheafsky: 5th grade, low-tech gamified class built over the last year.

Thank Yous

Thank you to Christy Cate Tammy Neil and Sarah Thomas for helping proofread!

©2016 Chris Aviles Teched Up Teacher - @techedupteacher - chrisaviles@techedupteacher.com